

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
ABERDEEN DIVISION**

TIMMY DALE WHITAKER

PLAINTIFF

v.

No. 1:13CV148-M-V

SHERIFF CHARLES RINEHART, ET AL.

DEFENDANTS

MEMORANDUM OPINION

This matter comes before the court on the *pro se* prisoner complaint of Timmy Dale Whitaker, who challenges the conditions of his confinement under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. For the purposes of the Prison Litigation Reform Act, the court notes that the plaintiff was incarcerated when he filed this suit. For the reasons set forth below, the instant case will be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief could be granted.

Factual Allegations

Whitaker alleges that in his state criminal trial the defendants withheld evidence and gave false testimony which led to his conviction. Whitaker also alleges that he did not commit the crime for which he was convicted. He alleges on page 14 of his complaint that the defendants “wrongfully convicted plaintiff for a crime he did not commit.”

Heck v. Humphrey

There is no requirement of “exhaustion” of *habeas corpus* remedies in order to proceed on a claim under § 1983. Rather, a § 1983 damage claim that calls into question the lawfulness of conviction or confinement or otherwise demonstrates the invalidity of the conviction or confinement is not cognizable under § 1983 until such time as a § 1983 plaintiff is able to

prove that the conviction or sentence has been reversed on direct appeal, expunged by executive order, declared invalid by a state tribunal authorized to make such determination, or called into question by a federal court’s issuance of

a writ of habeas corpus, 28 U.S.C. § 2254. A claim for damages bearing that relationship to a conviction or sentence that has not been so invalidated is not cognizable under § 1983.

Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477, 114 S.Ct. 2364, 2372, 129 L.Ed.2d 383 (1994) at 2372; *see also Boyd v. Biggers*, 31 F.3d 279, 283 (5th Cir. 1994). Only if the court finds that the plaintiff's § 1983 suit, even if successful, "will not demonstrate the invalidity of any outstanding criminal judgment against the plaintiff," should the § 1983 action be allowed to proceed. *See Mackey v. Dickson*, 47 F.3d 744, 746 (5th Cir. 1995). For Whitaker to prevail in this case, a jury would have to find that the actions of the defendants led to the conviction of an innocent man – the plaintiff Timmy Dale Whitaker. The jury would have to find that Whitaker is actually innocent of the crime of his conviction. Certainly, such a finding would call into question the validity of his conviction and sentence. Therefore, Whitaker must "demonstrate that the conviction or sentence has already been invalidated," *Heck*, 114 S. Ct. at 2372, in order for the § 1983 cause of action to accrue. He has not done so; as such the instant case must be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. A final judgment consistent with this memorandum opinion will issue today.

SO ORDERED, this the 29th day of August, 2013.

/s/ MICHAEL P. MILLS
CHIEF JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI